THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA) : (a) No officer presently on the rolls of R&AW is missing.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) One absconding officer was dismissed from service and his current whereabouts are not conclusively known.

(d) Does not arise.

SAARC Observer

3518. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT :
SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India backed US as SAARC observer;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that various countries such as China and Japan have shown interest to become as SAARC observers;

(d) if so, whether India backed such proposal; and

(e) if so, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED) : (a) to (e) The 13th SAARC Summit held in Dhaka in November, 2005 had welcomed and agreed in principle with the desire of the People's Republic of China and Japan to be associated as Observers. It had also decided that the SAARC Council of Ministers would decide the modalities in this regard at their 27th meeting, which is scheduled to be held in July, 2006. Subsequently, Republic of Korea (ROK) and USA have also formally requested for Observer status with SAARC. The 5th Special Session of the SAARC Standing Committee, which met on April 11, 2006 to draw up the modalities for Observers also considered the requests from ROK and USA and recommended that the requests be approved. The SAARC Council of Ministers will further consider the issue in July, 2006. All decisions in SAARC are taken on the basis of unanimity.